

LESSON 2: STYLES OF LEADERSHIP



*directing
delegating
participating
leadership style*

PURPOSE

In order to command respect and obedience as a leader, you must be prepared to lead. Since your actions and attitudes set the example for others to follow, you must also be ready for any type of situation that may occur. Therefore, how you lead — or your style of leadership — can mean the difference between success or failure of a mission. In this lesson, we will introduce you to three basic leadership styles: **directing**, **participating**, and **delegating**. You will have the opportunity to develop a style that works for you as you progress in rank in Army JROTC.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership styles are the pattern of behaviors that one uses to influence others. You can influence others in many different ways. Those patterns will be perceived by others as your **leadership style**.

Earlier we discussed autocratic and democratic styles of leadership and sources of leadership behavior. Autocratic leaders used positional power and direct authority to influence others and democratic leaders used personal power and involved their followers in the decision-

making and problem solving processes. These two styles were described using a continuum with autocratic on one end and democratic on the other. This implied your style was either one or the other.

When we discussed the historical perspective of leadership in Leadership Reshuffled, we learned that leadership styles did not have to be an either/or set of behaviors. In fact we learned that the situation the leader was faced with affected his/her choice of behaviors.

Think of your classmates who are leaders: the student body president, the cadet battalion commander, and group project leaders. These individuals have certain responsibilities in order to accomplish their goals. The manner in which they carry out those responsibilities and the way they interact with others is their style of leadership. The three basic leadership styles are **directing**, **participating**, and **delegating**.

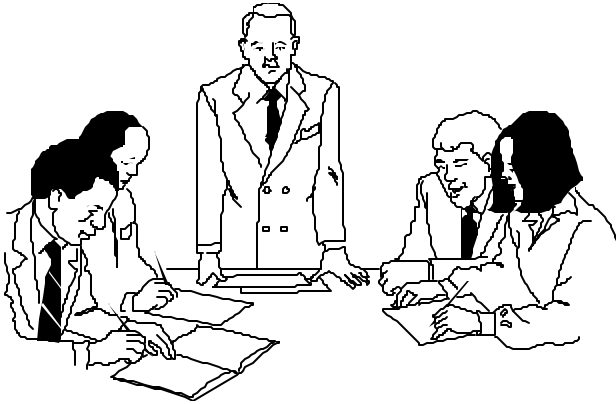
DIRECTING STYLE

Leaders use the directing leadership style when they tell their team members what they want done and how, when, and where they want it done, without getting others' advice or ideas. Then, they supervise closely to ensure team members follow their directions precisely.

This style is clearly appropriate when:

- Time to complete the mission is short and only you know what needs to be done and how to do it.
- You must lead people who lack experience at a certain task and you must direct their behavior.

Normally, most people will not resent this close supervision because you will be giving them exactly what they need and want.



Sometimes people think that leaders are using the directing style when they yell, scream, threaten, or intimidate followers. This is not a directing style — it is simply an abusive, unprofessional way to treat people. Do not confuse emotion or anger with styles of leadership.

PARTICIPATING STYLE

Leaders use the participating style when they consult with, obtain advice from, or ask the opinions of one or more followers before making a decision. Although leaders may ask for such information or recommendations, they are still the ones who make, and are responsible for, the final decision.

This style is appropriate for leadership situations when those whom you are leading are fairly competent and support your goals. Allowing them to participate can be a powerful team-building process. It will increase confidence and support if everyone has a part in developing the final plan.

Do not think that obtaining good advice from a teammate or using another member's plan or idea is a sign of weakness on your part. It is a sign of strength that your followers will respect. However, you are

responsible for the quality of your plans and decisions. If you believe that your follower's idea is not a good one, you must reject it and do what you believe is right, regardless of pressure to do otherwise.

DELEGATING STYLE

The delegating style is the most efficient. It requires the least amount of your time and energy to interact, direct, and communicate with your team members. Leaders use the delegating style when they delegate problem-solving and decision-making authority to a teammate or to a group of followers.



This style is appropriate when:

- Dealing with mature followers who support your goals and are competent and motivated to perform the task delegated.
- Certain key members of your team are able to analyze a problem or situation, determine what needs to be done, and do it.

Remember, you are still responsible for the results of their actions and decisions.



Keep in mind that no one style is superior to another one. What works in one situation may not work in another. You must develop the flexibility to use all three styles and the judgment to choose the style that best meets the situation and the needs of your team. In fact, you may want to use all three styles or different styles:

- With different followers or in different situations.
- When you receive a new project, you receive new personnel, or your supervisor changes
- If the competence, motivation, or commitment of your team changes.

You may recall the following three case studies from your LET 1 *Leadership* instruction. In LET 1, we had you determine which leadership traits Jon, Marla, and Brian used effectively and which ones they applied incorrectly. Now, reread each case study carefully. Identify what style or styles of leadership Jon, Marla, and Brian have, which principles of leadership they applied properly, and which principles they applied inappropriately.

Case 1

Jon is normally an average student; however, when he takes charge of a group to complete a project, his work and the finished effort of the group are always outstanding.

When asked about his group's results, his teammates proudly answer, "Jon makes it easy for us to complete our tasks. He helps us and makes suggestions when we need help, but he lets us do the work. If we have a problem, he always listens to our ideas on how to fix it.

"Because he is always excited about what he is doing, we get excited, too. He seems to know all he can about a task before we get started on it. While we are doing the task, he respects our views about how to complete it, he effectively uses the talents of everyone on the team, and he makes smart decisions. He is always there for us if we need him and, somehow, he still finds the time to do his share of the project. Because of his effective work habits, he instills good work habits in us also.

"He accepts responsibility for the outcome of our tasks, whether good or bad. None of us want a project to be done poorly, but he does not blame others for any mistakes that he or the team may have made. After finishing one task, we are always glad to begin the next project under his direction."

Case 2

Marla knows exactly what her position is all about. She gets excited whenever an instructor assigns her a project because she knows that she can get it done. Sometimes, she even suggests projects to her instructor. Based on her ideas, the instructor usually assigns them to her and her team.

Marla is highly motivated and has very structured work habits. She likes to map

out a project in which everything is her decision. She then tells her team members how to do each step of their tasks according to her direction. She watches everything that her team members do, and if they appear to be doing a task differently from her plan, she criticizes them.

Marla got upset once when a teammate was caught stealing. At first, she was afraid to talk to that person about the incident, and she did not know what to say to her peers who had also heard about it. Finally, after asking herself how she would like to be treated if she were the one involved, she called a team meeting.

At the meeting, Marla informed everyone that all team members make mistakes, not only as a team but also as individuals. She hoped that if they ever had any problems, they would turn to her and/or to another team member for help. They agreed.

Case 3

Brian is an easy-going person. He wants to complete projects with plenty of time left so that he and his friends on the team can relax. After he assigns tasks to each of his team members, he lets them figure out the best way to complete the tasks — without giving them any help, direction, or supervision. Plus, he rarely makes any decisions.

Then, when the time comes to complete the project, he still turns it in even though parts of it are not finished. When the final grade comes back, his group makes the lowest mark in the class, prompting an instructor to ask, “Why wasn’t your project done?”

Brian passes the blame on to his team members by saying, “They didn’t complete their parts as they should have. I don’t believe that I should have to be responsible for or receive a bad grade because of their sloppy efforts.”

When the other team members find out their grades, they approach Brian, “Why didn’t you tell us everything that we were supposed to do? We could have worked harder and done it better if we had just known.”

Do not fall into the trap of believing that there are some leadership techniques that must always work. You must evaluate every situation carefully when choosing the right style. Keep in mind that the best strategy in one situation may be inappropriate in another.

SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL

Ken Blanchard and his colleagues built upon existing research and continued discussions with successful leaders on how the follower affected leadership behaviors. They developed the Situational Leadership Model from their research. This model identifies four leadership styles (sets of behaviors) and four developmental levels of the followers and the relationship between the two.

The leadership styles in this model are based on the leader providing either directive or supportive behaviors.

Directive behavior is defined as how much structure, control and supervision the leader provides to the follower.

Supportive behavior is defined as how much praise, listening and facilitating the leader provides the follower.

These styles also vary in three ways: 1) the amount of direction given; 2) the amount of encouragement and support provided, and; 3) the amount of involvement the follower has in decision-making.

The four styles are known as:

Style 1	Directing
Style 2	Coaching
Style 3	Supporting
Style 4	Delegating

They are very similar to the three styles discussed earlier.

The behaviors that are present when using Style 1 will be more directive and less supportive. The follower will be told what, how, when, and where to do the task. There is little to no involvement from the follower in decision-making. Communication is one-way.

The behaviors present when using Style 2 will be providing equal amounts of directive and supportive behaviors. Here the leader will provide lots of direction, but will ask the follower for ideas and suggestions. A more two-way communication style exists. However, the leader is still in control of the decisions.

Style 3 behaviors are high supportive and low directive. While using this style the leader allows the follower to take control of the day to day decisions. The leader's job is to listen and facilitate the problem-solving process. The decision-making process begins to shift from the leader to the follower.

Style 4 requires low supportive and directive behaviors. Here the leader behaviors change to allowing the follower to make the decisions on how to solve an agreed upon situation or task.

Earlier we discussed there is no ONE best way to lead. The most effective leader matches his/her behaviors to the situation and the follower. The amount of decision making and involvement the leader allows the follower depends on the situation or the task (have they ever been in this situation before

or done this task before) and the level of confidence and competence (how sure of and how skilled in performing the task) the follower possesses.

Now that we know the four leadership styles and the pattern of behaviors in each, let's turn to the four developmental levels of the followers. These levels are based on the competence (the level of knowledge to do the task) and commitment (a combination of confidence and motivation).

The development level of the follower is based on his/her level of competence and confidence. There are four developmental levels:

- 1) low
- 2) low to moderate
- 3) moderate to high
- 4) high

Level one exists when the follower has a high level of commitment (very motivated and confident) with a low level of competence (knowledge of how the task is to be done). An example of this situation can be your first day of drill in the leadership lab. You were probably most excited and motivated to perform as a platoon leader or sergeant. You did not know how to perform this task, but you were committed to making it happen. It required your leader to give you exact directions on how to do the task. You listened and did what you were told so you could learn the routines. The leader matched his style of leadership to your development level.

The second developmental level happens after you have been given direction and you have practiced enough to feel competent to perform the task. Your level of commitment to practice begins to drop. You are getting somewhat bored with the repetition of drill. This level is described with having

low commitment and some competence. The leadership style now needs to change from directing to coaching. Letting you get involved in the process and asking for ideas, suggestions or shared leadership will be more effective at this time. The focus here is to keep your confidence on the rise while recharging your commitment. You are not ready to take charge yet and the leader recognizes you still need direction and practice to be able to perform outstandingly.

The third developmental level is when you have high competence (the ability to perform well) but your commitment level is not consistent. The supporting leadership style is more appropriate now. It is time to get you involved in making the task happen and shifting the responsibility from the leader to the follower. Again, the follower can perform the task, but for some reason is not highly committed to making it happen. The focus is to keep the performance high AND consistent.

The fourth developmental level is when the follower is highly committed and highly competent in performing the task. The follower not only knows how to perform the task well, but WANTS to perform the task well. The leader will focus on recognizing the performance.

As you progress through the JROTC program, you will be asked to take a leadership role in the leadership lab where you can practice the directing, coaching, supporting and delegating role with new cadets. You will also be involved in service community projects that will allow you to practice the leadership styles. These assignments will be made based on **your** performance and developmental level. You will be very competent at drilling tasks, however, this may be the first time you will experience a leadership role. You will be energetic and motivated because you know how to drill. However, the task of leading

others in drill is new to you and you will need direction from your instructor so you can build your competence and commitment through the process. As you become better skilled in matching leadership style to developmental level, your instructor will begin to coach, support and finally, delegate the role of leadership to you.

When in a leadership position, you must assess your team's capability to perform its mission, and then develop a plan that accomplishes it. You should use the style that your experience tells you is most appropriate after you have assessed the team's level of competence, motivation, and commitment to accomplish its mission.

A good rule of thumb to follow is to be flexible in your thinking. Approach each leadership situation as an opportunity to improve your leadership potential, ability, and style.

CONCLUSION

As you have learned, leadership styles are the pattern of behaviors that one uses to influence others. You now know that you can influence others in many different ways. Those patterns are perceived by others as your leadership style.

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